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Labor INFORMATION BULLETIN

VOLUME V NUMBER 3

MARCH
1938

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS · WASHINGTON

Labor INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Research for Action

By

Marion H. Hedges, Research Director
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Research work of a labor organization should be sharply differentiated from pure research in the economic or labor field. The purpose of union research is to put accurate information in the hands of officials or representatives at the moment they need it. This usually means at some eleventh hour before a wage conference, before a meeting of a legislative committee, or before arbitration proceedings. Because of its purpose and because of its largely emergency character, the research work of a labor organization may be described as research for action.

In the Research Department of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers we have occasionally done some studies which might relate to the statistical methods of more disinterested research groups. We have made studies of hazards in the electrical industry based upon the insurance records of our members. We have studied the financial structure of some of the larger corporations which employ our members. We have quite casually over a period of 10 years sought to throw some light upon the problem of displacement of men by machine power.

In the main, our labors are not original but are related to services of research librarians who assemble and file the work of other research agencies. For the 14 years of the existence of our Research Department we have kept extensive files on about 200 topics which touch the life of the labor movement in vital directions. This library has become unique, we believe, inasmuch as it represents a continuity of nearly half a generation and covers a great stirring era in American labor's history.

Prior to the establishment of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers' Research Department, the need for more systematic and orderly presentation of wage cases was emphasized by the fact that the union had entered into a continuous arbitration plan with employers. This plan may be described simply as the setting up of a supreme court of the industry known as The Council on Industrial Relations for the Electrical Construction Industry. This Council was composed of five representatives of the union and five representatives of employers, and was pledged to base its deliberations upon research information. The Council was established in 1921 and the Research Department in 1924. Both parties to a dispute were required to submit a written brief which accurately presented the economic and industrial factors in the case from labor's and the employer's side. Later the union, by referendum, wrote into its constitution that local unions were required by law to keep simple data on wages and hours, types of work performed, unemployment and employment. It was not until 1931 that this system of reporting was actually launched.

Such a goal represented a sharp departure from the oral tradition under which most unionists pursued their labors. Usually our officials went ill-prepared into wage negotiations with employers. Invariably they based their contentions upon the shaky reed of living costs and seldom considered other factors in wage making. The setting up of a simple system of reporting by our local unions has thus developed into a venture into adult education. We entered into

MAINTAINING THE FLOW OF ELECTRIC POWER

it with probably more enthusiasm than sense, without realizing that we were asking 100,000 skilled workers to change not only their habits of organization but their habits of thought.

The Research Department has never invoked the law against local unions which have been remiss in setting up the system of bookkeeping on wages and hours. The department has viewed the problem as one for education and persuasion and has proceeded on that basis. From the very beginning it has had enough returns from its widespread membership to afford a sizable sample from which sound deductions could be made.

The system works like this:

Each week the member reports to his local union the number of hours he has worked; the type of work performed; by whom he was employed; whether any work was paid for at overtime rates; and how much wages he received.

The information on the weekly reports is then recorded by the local on large ledger sheets. A separate sheet is used for each member. It contains the complete work record of that member for an entire year. The forms are supplied at cost by the international office.

Once a year the Research Department of the I.B.E.W. asks for summaries of the information contained on the ledger sheets. The annual report of the local union to the Research Department shows the total number of man-hours of employment obtained by its members during each month, how that employment was divided among the various types of electrical work (as construction, line work, work in and around power houses, electrical manufacturing, telephone work, radio work, electrical maintenance, cable splicing, etc.), the number of men who did that work, the total membership of the local union that month, and an estimate of the average number of members who were unemployed.

So far the Research Department has confined its reports on man-hours of employment to simple averages. The department has adopted a standard of 1,920 man-hours per worker per year as full-time employment. This standard is based on a 40-hour week, and 4 weeks to the month, or 48 weeks per year. This average, it will be seen at once, is somewhat high for members dependent upon the highly seasonal construction industry for employment, and somewhat low for members employed on steady jobs with power companies or industrial and commercial firms. Because of the diversification of employment of our members, the 1,920 man-hour standard, the Research Department believes, fits the organization as a whole with a fair degree of accuracy. From the 1,920 man-hour standard, the department has been able to compute the average percentage of full-time employment obtained by the organization's members.

One can readily see that such a system demands the cooperation not only of local unions but of every member in the lotal. Unions which have persisted in knowing as much about their economic life as they know about their finances discovered new ways of meeting their problems. They found, for instance, that they had a new weapon to turn against the chiseling employer

when he sought to quote one set of figures to one customer and another set to another. They also found that during the vexing days of the depression, when business managers were frantic with the problem of getting work for their members, they had at last discovered a way equitably to rotate work. Their research books docketed every member as to his prior employment and it was possible equitably to route him to part-time jobs on the basis of past employment.

Local unions also manifested new power in meeting their employers and soon learned to make excellent showings at wage conferences. After they had kept accurate records for a while, locals found that they had a basis even for predicting trends of work in types of construction and could better take care of their members. When social security went into effect, the local union discovered it had a tool by which it could aid its members to keep accurate pay-roll records, giving assurance to the members that they had some proof of their employment and their income other than the Social Security Board files in Washington.

We find that the principal source of disappointment in union research work lies in the fact that we must continuously reeducate some of the local unions about the value of this work to the organization. Because of the excessive labor involved in keeping accurate records and

Please Write Plainly and Mail Weekly

NAME..... WEEK ENDING.....19...

EMPLOYED BY.....

No.	Total Wages Rec'd	Total No. Hours						Other Types (Please Specify)	Line Work	Electric Light and Power	Cable Splicing	Maintenance	Wiring (Const'n)	Specify Number of Hours Worked in Each Class
														Straight Time
														Time and One-Half
														Double Time

SAMPLE RECORD CARD

REPAIRING A GENERATOR

because the service is directed largely towards the good of the whole organization rather than the immediate gains to the local union, locals tend to lapse in their work. On the other hand, we have seen local unions become sold on the system and grow enthusiastic about the method. Within the 7 years of this service, we can conclude that we have done little more than lay the basis for such a reporting system. However, it is so great in possibilities, it promises so much good for the organization as a whole, that we are constantly allured by the prospect of almost complete success in the not distant future.

We should remark in conclusion, also, that such a research service and such a recording system imply a fundamentally sound approach to the whole problem of industrial relations. We believe that, once collective bargaining is set up, the union becomes a partner in the business and is responsible in protecting the industry not only against employers but against itself. If there are going to be continuous, ongoing collective relations as between men and employers, unless these collective relations are to sink into intermittent warfare and contemptuous bickerings, the industrial ship must be guided by a steady star. That star is accurate, constantly revised information.

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Labor Requirements in Manufacturing Worsted Products

Boris Stern
Bureau of Labor Statistics

The productivity of textile workers engaged in making worsted serge increased by about 86 percent between 1910 and 1936. A recent study of the Bureau of Labor Statistics undertaken in cooperation with the National Research Project of the W.P.A. revealed that during that 25-year period changes in textile equipment and machinery made it possible to increase the man-hour output of worsted serge from 1.56 yards to 2.90 yards. For every 1,000 workers required to manufacture worsted serge with the most modern equipment and machinery available in 1910, 537 were needed with the most modern machines available in 1936.

The beginning of the twentieth century found the textile industry in the United States in a high stage of technological development. Most of the production processes and many of the machines in use today had been developed and put into operation prior to 1900, and by 1910 even the automatic loom was in use in weaving a large variety of cotton-textile products.

Many of the changes in methods and in equipment which have been introduced in manufacturing textiles since 1910 were developed gradually by plant management as a result of long years of experience. The large majority of such improvements, however, resulted from advances made in the machinery-manufacturing industry.

There is hardly a department or section in a woolen or worsted mill which has not been affected by the trend towards modernization. Semiautomatic machines have been made automatic. Automatic processes have been simplified and extended. Even where no fundamental changes in machines have been made, their efficiency, measured both in quantity and quality of the product manufactured, has been increased by redesigning and the addition of attachments. Existing machinery and equipment have been improved through the application of better gears and shafts, more modern bearings, the use of more effective lubricants, and other devices.

The utilization of the most advanced textile machinery on the market in 1936 as compared with the most advanced machinery on the market in 1910 has increased the man-hour output in all the departments involved in the manufacture of worsted serge. As a result, barely half as much labor was required to produce a given amount of worsted cloth in 1936 as in 1910. The increase in man-hour output was not, however, equally applicable to all departments involved in manufacturing worsted cloth. Great technological changes and large increases in man-hour output in some of the smaller departments affected a comparatively small proportion of the total number of workers. In other departments where larger numbers of workers were employed, smaller increases in the output per man per hour resulted

SCOURING RAW WOOL

OCCUPATIONAL CHANGES IN WORSTED MILLS, 1910-1936

DEPARTMENT AND OCCUPATION	WORKERS NEEDED TO PRODUCE 74,400 YARDS OF SERGE IN TWO 40-HOUR SHIFTS	
	1910	1936
Carding		
Total . .	108	58
Supervisors	10	8
Sorters	50	20
Scouring feeders	6	2
Stockmen	8	8
Drier and scouring men . .	6	2
Soap and chemical men . . .	2	2
Picker feeders	4	2
Card feeders	8	6
Can doffers	6	4
Strippers	8	4
Top Making		
Total . .	74	58
Supervisors	4	4
Gill tenders	38	26
Comb tenders	14	12
Ballers	10	8
Pin setters	2	2
Noil men	2	2
Waste men and truckers . .	4	4
Drawing		
Total . .	120	102
Supervisors	10	10
Gill operators	16	16
Draw-box operators	16	16
Cone finisher operators . .	8	8
Reducer operators	12	8
Rover operators	52	38
Set weighers	4	4
Roving men	2	2
Spinning		
Total . .	156	130
Supervisors	12	12
Spinners	92	86
Doffers	36	16
Roving men	8	8
Sweepers and cleaners . . .	8	8

DEPARTMENT AND OCCUPATION	WORKERS NEEDED TO PRODUCE 74,400 YARDS OF SERGE IN TWO 40-HOUR SHIFTS	
	1910	1936
Twisting		
Total . .	160	60
Supervisors	4	4
Twister tenders	144	32
Winders	none	12
Bobbin boys	12	12
Spooling and Warping		
Total . .	34	20
Supervisors	2	2
Spooler or winder tenders .	14	6
Warper tenders	8	4
Creel tenders	6	4
Yarn and beam men	4	4
Slashing and Dressing		
Total . .	10	8
Slasher tenders	4	2
Slasher helpers	4	4
Beam men	2	2
Filling Preparation		
Total . .	62	24
Jack-spool winders	30	eliminated
Filling winders	22	20
Doffers	6	eliminated
Yarn boys	4	4
Weaving		
Total . .	472	182
Supervisors	6	6
Weavers	400	112
Loom fixers	34	28
Cloth perchers	6	6
Drawing and twisting hands.	8	8
Beam men	2	2
Filling carriers	8	8
Cleaners	8	12
All Departments Covered . . .	1,196	642

in greater reductions in the total labor force. Among the departments in the mills producing worsted serge, the largest increases in man-hour output occurred in twisting (166.7 percent), weaving (159.3 percent), filling preparation (153.2 percent), and sorting, scouring, and picking (93.7 percent).

The most important changes affecting the largest number of workers in worsted mills occurred in the weaving departments. Worsted weaving is in most respects similar to cotton-textile weaving and the looms are similar in design but somewhat heavier in construction. Most worsted fabrics in 1910 were woven on nonautomatic looms. Weavers were required to stop the loom each time they had to replenish the filling supply. Since 1910 the automatic box loom has been developed, which replenishes the filling supply automatically without stopping the loom. Not only does the loom now stop automatically when a breakage in the yarn occurs, but the position of the broken thread is also indicated. These features have greatly reduced the time required to tend the loom. They have also increased the efficiency of the loom, which now needs fewer adjustments and can be operated at a faster pace than was possible in 1910.

It was customary in 1910 to assign two nonautomatic looms to each weaver of worsted serge. In 1936 the usual assignment was 6 automatic looms per weaver, although some mills assigned as many as 12 looms, and with the help of battery hands even 20 to 24 looms per weaver. These changes made it possible to reduce the amount of labor needed in the weaving department by approximately 61.4 percent, as compared with 1910. To produce 74,400 yards of worsted cloth in two 40-hour shifts in 1910 required the employment of 400 weavers, 34 loom fixers, and 8 cleaners. In 1936 the same amount of worsted cloth could be woven by 112 weavers, 28 loom fixers, and 12 cleaners.

Probably the most outstanding change affecting the production of woolen and worsted yarn has been the replacement of the small bobbins or packages used in 1910 on the mule or cap spinning frames by the larger packages now used on the ring spinning frames. Although the processes of yarn-making have remained practically unchanged since 1910, the larger packages have resulted in increasing the efficiency of the machines and in greatly reducing the amount of doffing required. This change has reduced labor requirements in all departments engaged in the processing or handling of yarn, such as spinning, twisting, spooling and warping, and filling preparation. For instance, in 1910 the bobbin used on a twisting machine contained about 3 ounces of yarn. This was increased to about 21 ounces in 1936. As a result, the 144 twister tenders needed in the twisting department to process 74,400 yards of worsted serge in 1910 were replaced by 12 winders and 32 twister tenders in 1936.

SPINNING FRAME IN OPERATION

Building Construction in 1937

HERMAN B. BYER
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

Building activity in 1937 continued the advance started in 1935. Reports received by the Bureau of Labor Statistics from 1,728 cities with a population of nearly 61,000,000 show that the value of building permits issued in these cities in 1937 was approximately $1,699,000,000.

Forty-four percent of the total estimated cost of buildings for which permits were issued in 1937 was spent on residential buildings, 34 percent on nonresidential buildings, and 22 percent on additions, alterations, and repairs.

New homes in 1937 were provided at a rate of 306 per 100,000 persons compared with the rate of 290 in the preceding year. Smaller towns with a population of 2,500 to 5,000 led in home building activity with a rate of 546 new houses per 100,000 population. Cities with a population of 100,000 to 500,000 built new homes at a rate of 225 per 100,000 inhabitants.

Out of every $100,000 spent on residential buildings in 1937, approximately $70,000 went for one-family dwellings, $22,000 for multi-family dwellings, $4,000 for two-family dwellings, and the remainder for other types of residential buildings including hotels.

PERMITS AND VALUE OF BUILDING CONSTRUCTION IN 1,728 CITIES

KIND OF BUILDING	1937		1936		PERCENTAGE CHANGE 1936 TO 1937	
	NUMBER OF PERMITS	ESTIMATED COST	NUMBER OF PERMITS	ESTIMATED COST	NUMBER OF PERMITS	ESTIMATED COST
Total	665,032	$1,698,732,000	627,167	$1,538,018,000	+ 6.0	+10.4
Residential:	*134,138*	*755,824,000*	*120,868*	*720,368,000*	*+11.0*	*+ 4.9*
1-family dwellings	123,548	532,055,000	111,440	481,950,000	+10.9	+10.4
2-family dwellings	5,536	30,455,000	4,276	22,799,000	+29.5	+33.6
Multifamily dwellings	3,409	165,943,000	3,741	187,631,000	- 8.9	-11.6
All other	1,645	27,371,000	1,411	27,988,000	+16.6	- 2.2
Nonresidential:	*123,037*	*569,324,000*	*117,667*	*494,274,000*	*+ 4.6*	*+15.3*
Factories and workshops . . .	3,176	90,382,000	2,651	71,022,000	+19.8	+27.3
Public buildings	510	91,960,000	574	70,649,000	-11.1	+30.2
Public works and utilities .	590	30,401,000	574	31,502,000	+ 2.8	- 3.5
Schools and libraries	608	102,671,000	944	97,370,000	-35.6	+ 5.4
Stores and warehouses	11,650	107,012,000	10,592	85,120,000	+10.0	+25.7
All other	106,503	147,498,000	102,332	138,611,000	+ 4.1	+ 6.4
Additions, alterations, repairs	*407,857*	*372,984,000*	*388,632*	*323,376,000*	*+ 4.9*	*+15.3*

Out of every $1,000,000 spent on the construction of nonresidential buildings in 1937, $188,000 went for stores and warehouses, $180,000 for schools and libraries, $161,000 for public buildings, $159,000 for factories and work shops, $53,000 for public works and utilities, $47,000 for institutions, $47,000 for amusement buildings, and the balance for other types of nonresidential construction, such as churches, garages, service stations, etc.

Production, Employment, and Pay Rolls in 1937

Nelson M. Bortz
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Industrial activity in 1937 followed an uneven course. The year started with a high level and production, employment, and weekly pay rolls continued to advance during the early months. In most industries the peak was reached in the late spring or early summer. A high level was maintained throughout the summer. Industrial activity declined rapidly during the autumn months and by December many industries were operating at a rate considerably lower than at any time during the last 3 years. Averaged for the year as a whole, industrial activity in 1937 was slightly higher than in 1936.

The widest fluctuations occurred in the industries producing durable goods. Output of iron and steel advanced steadily until May, when production was about 8 percent greater than in January and considerably above the average for the year 1929. After a sharp decline in June, production increased again in July and August. During the last quarter of the year production of steel dropped so sharply that by December output was less than one-third of the production in May. Automobile production recorded steady improvement until May, but in the closing months of the year it was considerably below the corresponding period of 1936. Output of cement and plate glass in 1937 was at about the same level as in the preceding year. Orders for tools to be used in the manufacture of machinery exceeded those for any previous year and averaged 37 percent higher than in 1936.

Among nondurable-goods industries output of textiles and leather in 1937 averaged about the same as in 1936. Slaughtering and meat packing establishments registered a 9 percent drop in activity, but the manufacture of tobacco products increased about 5 percent.

Freight-car loadings were slightly higher last year than in 1936. They averaged about 28 percent below 1929. The value of construction permits issued in 1937 was about 10 percent higher than in 1936. Sales by department stores averaged nearly 6 percent above 1936 and rural sales of general merchandise also rose 6 percent.

Average Employment and Pay Rolls. Both factory employment and weekly pay rolls averaged over the 12 months were higher in 1937 than in any year since 1929. The trend was upward in the early part of the year. It leveled off in the late spring and declined sharply at the close of 1937.

Employment in manufacturing industries increased during the first 2 months of 1937. From March until October it did not fluctuate a great deal and remained at a level slightly above the average for the 3 years 1923-25, and slightly below the average for 1929. Sharp declines of about 6 percent in November and 6.5 percent in December reduced the number of workers employed in manufacturing industries at the close of the year to the level of April 1936. The fluctuation in employment was most marked in the durable-goods industries.

Weekly pay rolls fluctuated more sharply than employment. The aggregate weekly wage income of the workers employed in manufacturing industries rose about 10 percent during January and February. This was due to higher employment, widespread increases in rates of pay, and a slightly longer workweek. At their peak in May, pay rolls averaged about 15 percent higher than in January. They fluctuated slightly in the next few months and declined sharply—about 20 percent—from the middle of October to the middle of December.

The statistics on industrial production are taken from reports of the Federal Reserve Board and the Department of Commerce. The figures on employment and pay rolls, except Class I steam railroads, are from the records of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Among the nonmanufacturing industries surveyed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for the year as a whole increased 27 percent in metal mining, 8 percent in telephone and telegraph, 6 percent in wholesale trade, and about 5 percent in crude petroleum, electric light and power and manufactured gas, laundries, and retail trade. Smaller gains were registered in most of the other nonmanufacturing industries with the exception of anthracite mining, where on the average slightly fewer workers were employed in 1937 than in 1936.

The gains in weekly pay rolls in these industries were more pronounced. The largest increases were 53 percent in metal mining, 17 percent in quarrying, 16 percent in crude petroleum, and 14 percent in telephone and telegraph. Wholesale and retail trade each reported pay rolls averaging about 10 percent higher than in 1936.

Total Employment in 1937. Averaged for the year as a whole, approximately 34,600,000 workers had jobs in 1937 in industries other than agricultural. Total nonagricultural employment last year was 4 percent higher than in 1936, 25 percent higher than in 1932, and about 4 percent lower than in 1929.

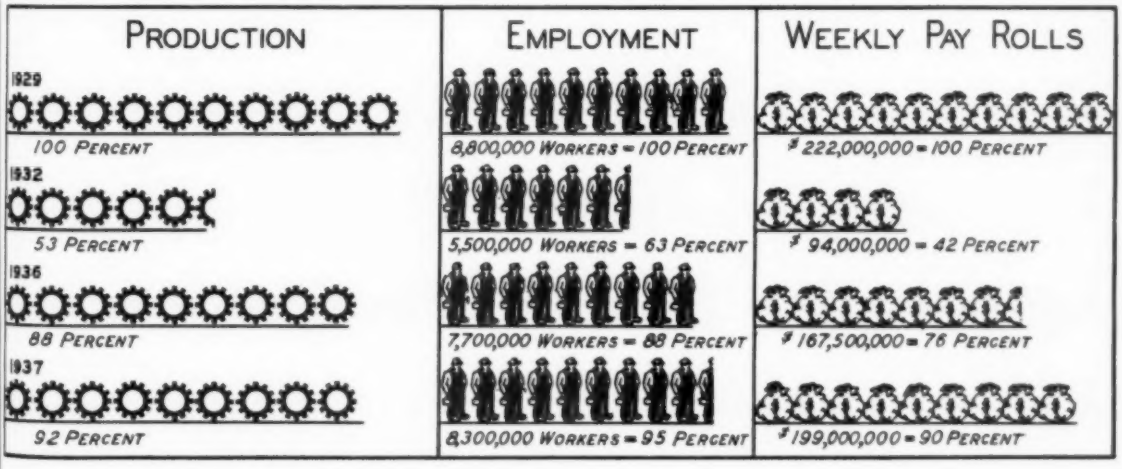
Nonagricultural employment increased steadily from 33,600,000 in January to approximately 35,100,000 in September. Employment in September was higher than at any time since December 1929. During the last few months of 1937 it was reduced sharply to approximately 33,570,000 in December, or 850,000 fewer workers than in December a year ago.

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

The Federal Reserve Board's index for measuring the physical volume of production in manufacturing industries averaged about 4 percent higher in 1937 than in the preceding year. It was 8 percent lower than in 1929 and about 74 percent higher than in 1932, when factory output reached its lowest point in the depression.

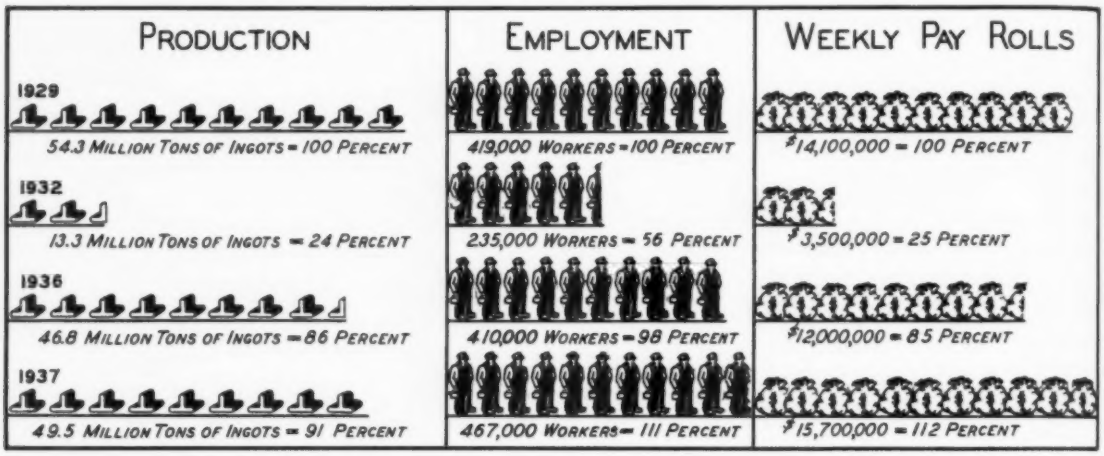
Employment in manufacturing establishments averaged over the 12 months was about 8 percent higher in 1937 than in 1936. For every 100 factory wage earners employed in 1929, 95 had factory jobs in 1937, compared with 88 in 1936 and 63 in 1932.

Weekly pay rolls in manufacturing industries averaged nearly 19 percent higher in 1937 than in 1936 and more than twice as high as in 1932. For every $1,000 paid out in weekly wages in 1929, factory wage earners received on the average $900 in 1937, as against $755 in the preceding year and $425 in 1932.



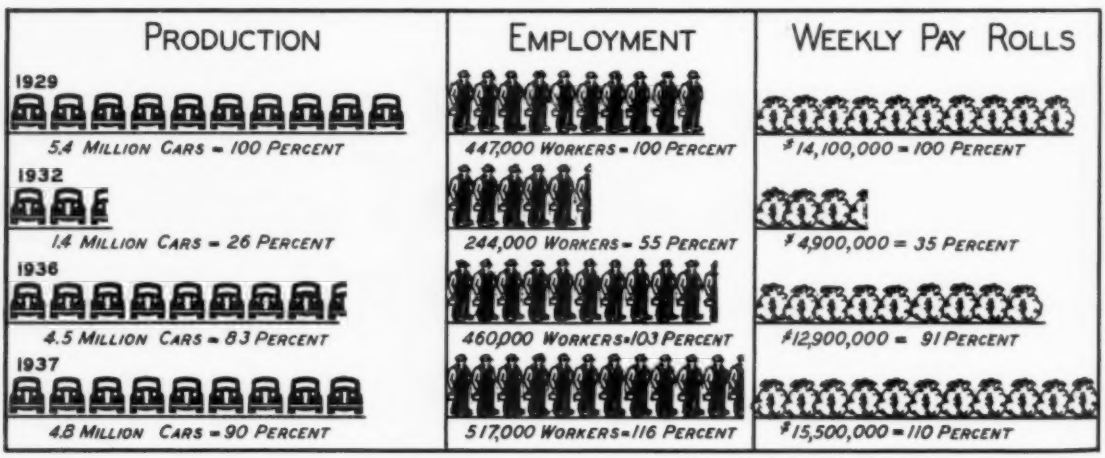
STEEL

Output of steel ingots in 1937 was about 6 percent larger than in the preceding year and almost four times as large as in 1932. Both employment and pay rolls in blast furnaces, steel works, and rolling mills in 1937 averaged higher than in 1929. Employment averaged 14 percent and pay rolls 30 percent higher, compared with 1936. About twice as many steel workers had jobs last year as in 1932, and average weekly pay rolls were four and one-half times as large as in 1932.


PRODUCTION
EMPLOYMENT
WEEKLY PAY ROLLS
1929
54.3 MILLION TONS OF INGOTS = 100 PERCENT
419,000 WORKERS = 100 PERCENT
$14,100,000 = 100 PERCENT
1932
13.3 MILLION TONS OF INGOTS = 24 PERCENT
235,000 WORKERS = 56 PERCENT
$3,500,000 = 25 PERCENT
1936
46.8 MILLION TONS OF INGOTS = 86 PERCENT
410,000 WORKERS = 98 PERCENT
$12,000,000 = 85 PERCENT
1937
49.5 MILLION TONS OF INGOTS = 91 PERCENT
467,000 WORKERS = 111 PERCENT
$15,700,000 = 112 PERCENT

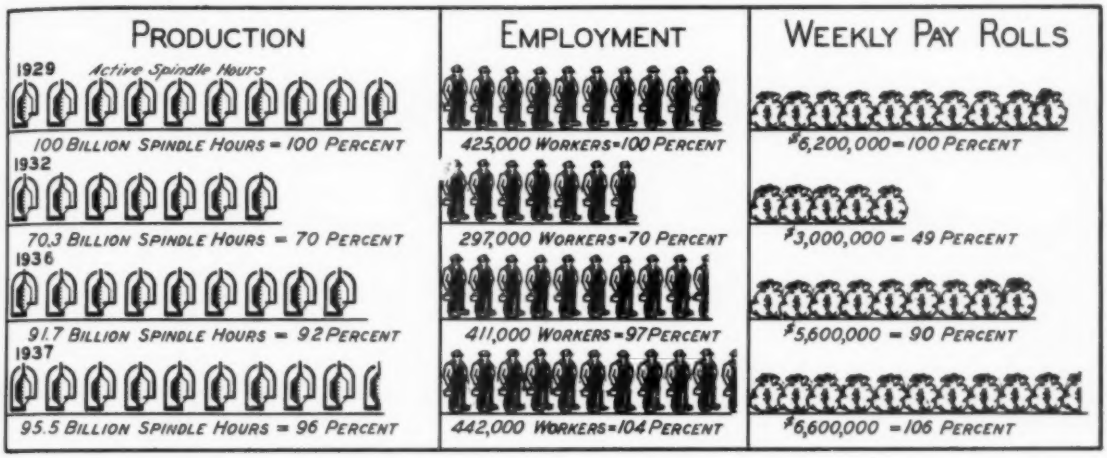
AUTOMOBILES

Approximately 4,800,000 passenger cars and trucks were assembled in the United States in 1937, compared with 4,500,000 units in 1936, 1,400,000 in 1932, and 5,400,000 in 1929. The number of automobile workers employed in 1937 increased 12 percent and average weekly pay rolls rose 20 percent, compared with 1936. More than twice as many automobile workers had jobs in 1937 as in 1932 and weekly pay rolls were more than three times as large.



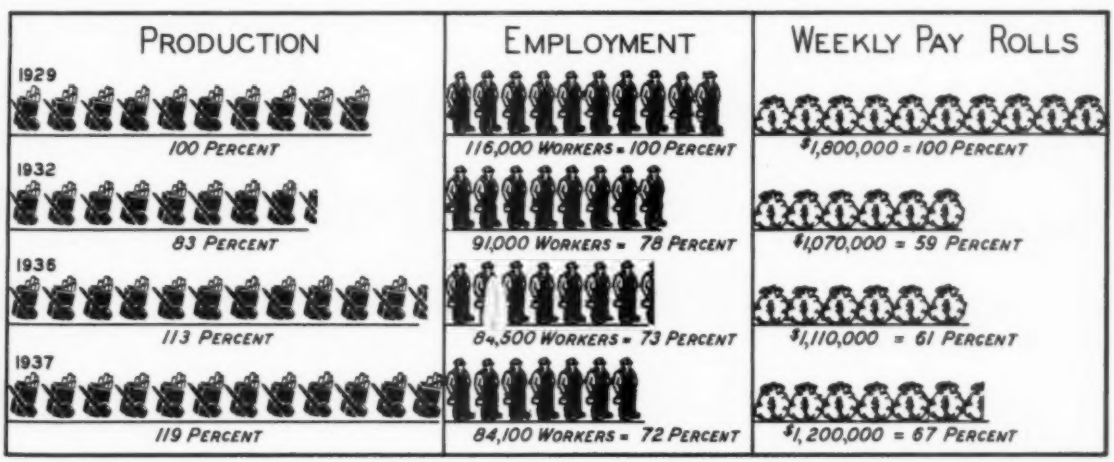
COTTON TEXTILES

Measured by the total time spindles were actually engaged in producing yarn, operations in cotton-textile mills in 1937 averaged about 4.5 percent higher than in the preceding year, but 4.5 percent lower than in 1929. About 7 percent more mill hands had jobs last year than the year before. Weekly pay rolls averaged 18 percent higher. Employment in cotton-textile mills last year averaged 4 percent and wage disbursements about 6 percent higher than in 1929.



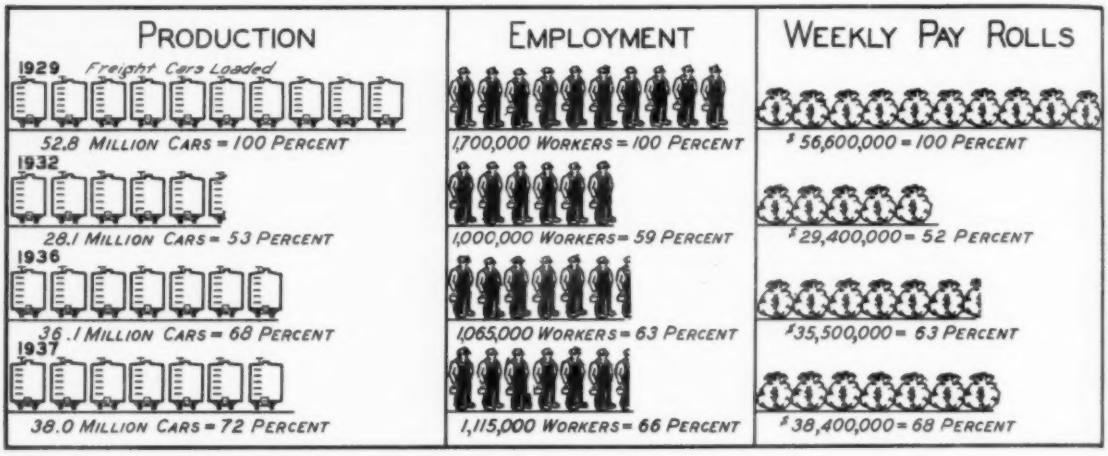
TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Total production in 1937 of cigars, cigarettes, and other tobacco products combined was the largest recorded in the history of the industry. On the average employment in 1937 was slightly lower than in 1936 and about 28 percent lower than in 1929. Aggregate weekly pay rolls of the wage earners employed in establishments manufacturing tobacco products advanced approximately 8 percent in 1937, but were only about two-thirds as large as in 1929.



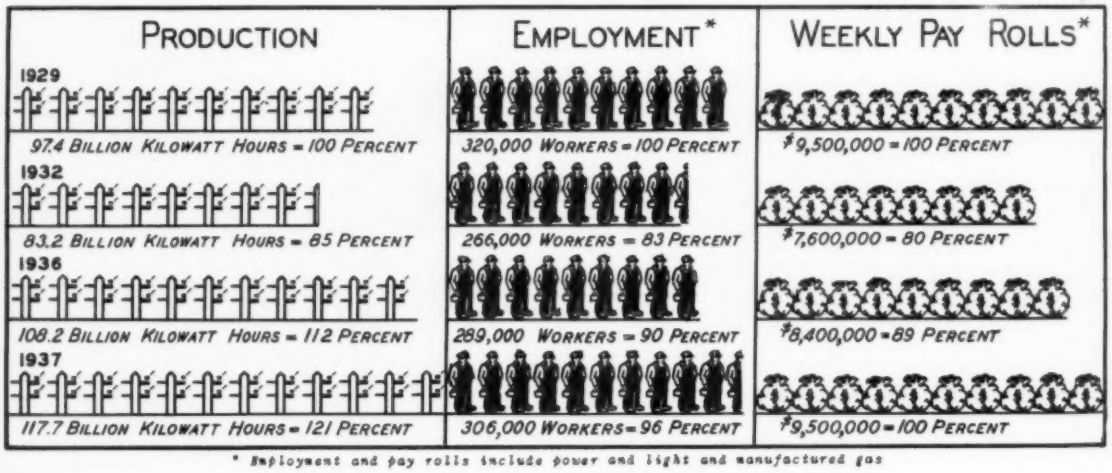
CLASS I RAILROADS

Nearly 2,000,000 more cars of freight were loaded by Class I railroads in 1937 than in 1936 and 10,000,000 more than in 1932. Car loadings last year averaged about 28 percent below 1929. Slightly more workers were employed last year than in 1936 and 1932. Weekly wage disbursements in 1937 averaged about 8 percent higher than in 1936 and 30 percent higher than in 1932. Both employment and weekly pay rolls in 1937 were about one-third below their 1929 levels.



ELECTRIC POWER

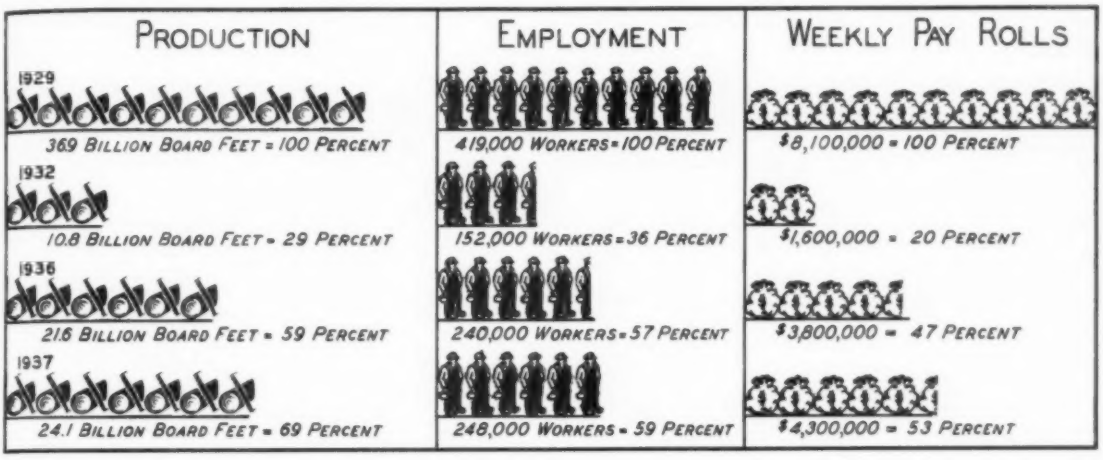
Production of electricity for public use again established a new record with a total output in 1937 about 9 percent higher than in the preceding year and 21 percent higher than in 1929. For every 100 workers employed in 1929 in producing electric power and light and manufactured gas, 96 had jobs in 1937, compared with 90 in 1936 and 83 in 1932. For every $1,000 paid out in weekly wages in 1929, the industry paid out an equal amount in 1937, $890 in 1936, and $800 in 1932.



* Employment and pay rolls include power and light and manufactured gas

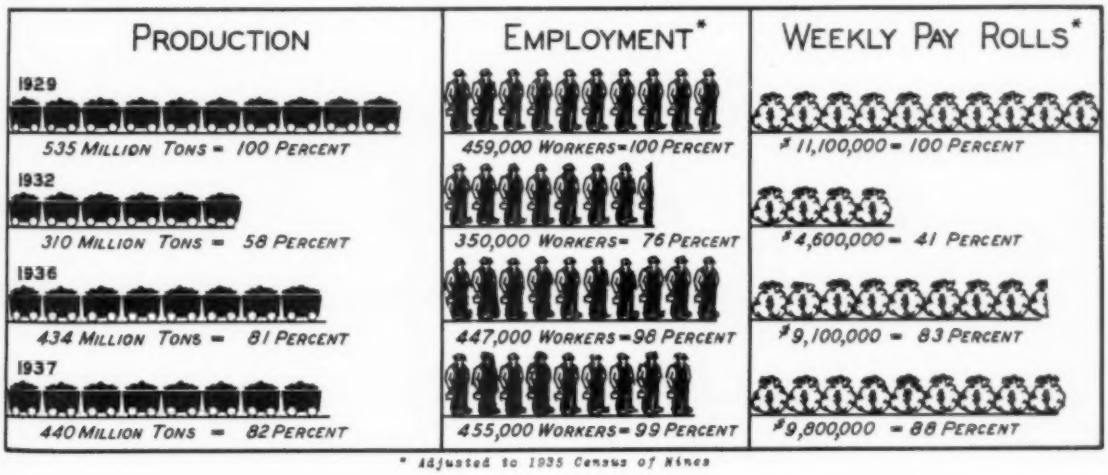
LUMBER

Despite an increase of nearly 12 percent in the quantity of lumber cut last year, output remained about 30 percent below 1929. Employment in sawmills and logging camps in 1937 advanced slightly, while average weekly pay rolls rose by nearly 13 percent. Both employment and weekly pay rolls last year were considerably greater than in 1932, but they were only slightly more than half as large as their averages for 1929.



BITUMINOUS COAL

Production of bituminous coal and average employment of miners was slightly higher in 1937 than in the preceding year. Weekly pay rolls averaged more than 7 percent higher. Compared with 1932, production in 1937 was 42 percent, employment 30 percent, and weekly pay rolls more than 100 percent larger. Employment in 1937 averaged almost as large as in 1929, but production and average weekly pay rolls to the miners employed were below their 1929 levels.



* Adjusted to 1935 Census of Mines

EMPLOYMENT AND PAY ROLLS IN JANUARY 1938

The drastic decline in employment which started in October 1937 continued in January 1938. It is estimated from reports submitted each month to the Department of Labor and to the other government agencies that there were about 1,300,000 fewer workers employed on nonagricultural jobs in the middle of January than in the middle of December. The drop in employment since October 1937 is estimated at 2,800,000.

The most pronounced decline in employment occurred in manufacturing industries, where over half a million wage earners were laid off in January. Employment was also reduced by 47,000 in steam railroads, 15,000 in coal mines, and about 3,500 in metal mines. The decline in private building construction was seasonal but larger than in any of the preceding 5 years.

Most of the basic industries reported considerably fewer workers employed this January than in January a year ago. Over the 12-month period outstanding reductions in employment were 1,200,000 in manufacturing industries, 115,000 in railroads, and 36,000 in bituminous mines. The number of workers employed in private building construction was also smaller than in January 1937.

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

Of the 89 manufacturing industries regularly surveyed each month by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 84 had fewer workers employed in January than in the previous month. Reductions in the weekly pay rolls were reported for 82 of these industries. In many instances the pay-roll declines were relatively greater than the declines in employment, due largely to reduced plant operations or to staggered employment.

Among the durable-goods industries the most significant declines in employment and weekly pay rolls during the month were--

	PERCENT OF DECREASE	
	EMPLOYMENT	PAY ROLLS
Automobiles and parts . .	23.2	29.7
Radios and phonographs .	21.6	22.8
Lighting equipment . . .	20.5	26.9
Railroad car building . .	20.3	24.7
Cement	17.1	23.5
Wirework	16.2	20.3
Hardware	15.7	30.2
Brick, tile, terra cotta.	14.2	21.0

In the nondurable-goods industries most of the reductions in employment and weekly pay rolls in January were of a seasonal nature. Significant declines were reported in men's furnishings, cigars and cigarettes, shirts and collars, carpets and rugs, cane-sugar refining, and confectionery.

Several nondurable-goods industries, such as shoes, millinery, meat packing, fertilizers, and chewing tobacco, reported larger employment.

DURABLE-GOODS INDUSTRIES

Employment. All groups of industries engaged in the manufacture of durable goods reported considerably reduced employment in January. The number of workers laid off in these industries during the month ranged from 27,500 in railroad repair shops to 80,800 in iron and steel and 81,500 in machinery manufacturing.

Over the 12-month period, January 1937 to January 1938, employment in the durable-goods industries declined by 630,200. The reductions in the separate groups were:

166,700 in iron and steel
116,700 in transportation equipment
102,800 in lumber
97,400 in machinery manufacturing
68,400 in railroad repair shops
52,300 in nonferrous metals
25,900 in stone, clay, and glass

ESTIMATED EMPLOYMENT AND PAY ROLLS IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

JANUARY 1938, DECEMBER 1937, and JANUARY 1937

INDUSTRY	NUMBER OF WORKERS EMPLOYED			AMOUNT OF WEEKLY PAY ROLL		
	JANUARY 1938*	DECEMBER 1937‡	JANUARY 1937	JANUARY 1938*	DECEMBER 1937‡	JANUARY 1937
All industries	6,911,900	7,422,600	8,082,700	$144,520,000	$164,388,000	$184,474,000
Durable-goods groups:	*3,288,800*	*3,652,900*	*3,919,000*	*71,872,000*	*87,584,000*	*98,538,000*
Iron and steel	692,400	773,200	859,100	14,178,000	17,729,000	24,609,000
Machinery	920,000	1,001,500	1,017,400	22,615,000	26,356,000	26,451,000
Transportation equipment	518,400	594,500	635,100	11,757,000	15,906,000	17,334,000
Railroad repair shops	226,600	254,100	295,000	6,375,000	7,555,000	8,301,000
Nonferrous metals	249,800	279,500	302,100	5,379,000	6,340,000	7,116,000
Lumber	488,600	528,700	591,400	7,706,000	8,859,000	10,048,000
Stone, clay, and glass	193,000	221,400	218,900	3,862,000	4,839,000	4,679,000
Nondurable-goods groups:	*3,623,100*	*3,769,700*	*4,163,700*	*72,648,000*	*76,804,000*	*85,936,000*
Textiles	1,373,600	1,437,100	1,745,100	20,558,000	21,761,000	29,965,000
Leather	277,200	264,600	315,400	4,604,000	4,080,000	6,029,000
Foods	680,900	712,900	698,900	16,093,000	16,744,000	15,250,000
Tobacco	71,100	84,100	79,000	970,000	1,239,000	1,048,000
Paper and printing	535,900	552,900	553,900	14,122,000	14,984,000	14,672,000
Chemicals	373,000	385,500	398,400	9,744,000	10,311,000	9,894,000
Rubber	105,000	115,500	136,000	2,292,000	2,674,000	3,447,000
Unclassified	206,400	217,100	237,000	4,265,000	5,011,000	5,631,000

* *Preliminary* ‡ *Revised*

Weekly Pay Rolls. The total weekly wage income of the workers employed in the durable-goods industries declined by slightly more than $15,700,000 during January. All durable-goods groups of industries reported lower weekly pay rolls. The reductions ranged in amounts from $961,000 in nonferrous metals and $977,000 in stone, clay, and glass to $3,741,000 in machinery and $4,149,000 in transportation equipment, largely automobiles.

The weekly wage income of the workers employed in manufacturing durable goods in January was nearly $26,700,000 smaller than in January a year ago. Over the year's period pay rolls declined by $10,430,000 in iron and steel, $5,577,000 in transportation equipment, $3,836,000 in machinery, $2,342,000 in lumber, $1,926,000 in railroad repair shops, $1,737,000 in nonferrous metals, and $817,000 in stone, clay, and glass.

NONDURABLE-GOODS INDUSTRIES

Employment. Except for the increase of 12,600 workers in the manufacturing of leather and leather products, all nondurable-goods industries reported fewer workers employed in January. The drop in employment in these industries ranged from 10,500 in rubber, and 10,700 in the unclassified groups to 32,000 in foodstuffs and 63,500 in textiles.

All nondurable-goods groups of industries reported fewer workers on their pay rolls this January than in January 1937. The largest decline (371,500) occurred in textiles. Among the other groups the reduction in employment

ranged from 7,900 in tobacco to 25,400 in chemicals, 31,000 in rubber, and 38,200 in leather.

Weekly Pay Rolls. The total weekly wage income of workers engaged in manufacturing nondurable goods in January declined by more than $4,150,000. In the leather group weekly pay rolls advanced $524,000. All other groups registered drops in weekly pay rolls, varying in amounts from $269,000 in tobacco to $1,203,000 in textiles.

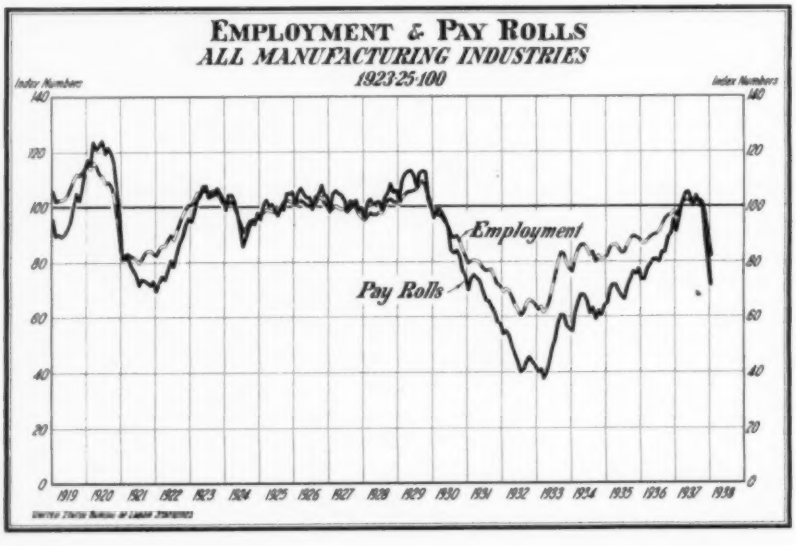
Over the 12-month period, January 1937 to January 1938, weekly pay rolls in the nondurable-goods industries declined by nearly $13,300,000. The largest decline ($9,407,000) was reported in textiles. Other reductions were $1,425,000 in leather, $1,366,000 in the unclassified group, $1,155,000 in rubber, $550,000 in paper and printing, $150,000 in chemicals, and $78,000 in tobacco. In foodstuffs weekly pay rolls this January were $843,000 larger than in January a year ago.

TREND OF EMPLOYMENT AND PAY ROLLS IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

Factory employment declined about 7 percent in January to a level 14.5 percent lower than in January a year ago. The number of workers employed in the durable-goods industries in January was about 16 percent smaller than in January 1937, and in the nondurable-goods industries employment was 13 percent smaller.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics index of employment in manufacturing industries was 82.5 in January, compared with 88.6 in the preceding month, 96.5 in January 1937, and 100 as the average for the 3 years 1923-25. In other words, for every 1,000 workers employed in factories in 1923-25, 825 had jobs in January, as against 886 in December and 965 in January a year ago.

Weekly pay rolls were 12 percent lower than in December and 21.5 percent lower than in January 1937. The Bureau's pay-roll index for manufacturing industries shows that for every $1,000 disbursed in weekly wages in 1923-25, factories paid out $711 in January, $809 in December, and $907 in January of last year.



BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

Factory Pay-Roll Index

1923-25 = 100

1938	
January....	71.1*
1937	
December...	80.9
November...	89.3
October....	100.1
September..	100.1
August.....	103.8
July.....	100.4
June.....	102.9
May.....	105.2
April.....	104.9
March.....	101.1
February...	95.8
January....	90.7

* *Preliminary*

HOURS OF WORK AND EARNINGS IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

Factory employment in January averaged slightly more than 33 hours per week--about 1½ hours per week less than in the preceding month and nearly 7 hours per week less than in January 1937. Average hourly earnings of 66½ cents were about the same as in December, but approximately 7 cents per hour more than in January a year ago. Weekly earnings averaged $21.90 in January. This was about $1.05 per week less than in December and $1.70 per week less than in January 1937.

Weekly earnings:
- $25.15 in automobiles
- 24.45 in foundries and machine shops
- 20.15 in blast furnaces and rolling mills
- 17.70 in sawmills
- 16.55 in brick manufacturing

Average weekly hours of work and average hourly and weekly earnings in the five selected nondurable-goods industries in January 1938 were--

HOURS OF WORK AND EARNINGS IN INDUSTRIES MANUFACTURING TEXTILE FABRICS

INDUSTRY	HOURS OF WORK			HOURLY EARNINGS			WEEKLY EARNINGS		
	JANUARY 1938	INCREASE OR DECREASE		JANUARY 1938	INCREASE OR DECREASE		JANUARY 1938	INCREASE OR DECREASE	
		DEC. 1937 TO JAN. 1938	JAN. 1937 TO JAN. 1938		DEC. 1937 TO JAN. 1938	JAN. 1937 TO JAN. 1938		DEC. 1937 TO JAN. 1938	JAN. 1937 TO JAN. 1938
		Percent	*Percent*	*Cents*	*Percent*	*Percent*		*Percent*	*Percent*
Carpets and rugs	25.0	- 1.6	-39.2	66.0	+ 2.1	+15.8	$16.55	+ 0.2	-28.8
Cotton goods	30.0	- 2.1	-22.7	42.0	- 0.4	+ 8.2	12.75	- 2.5	-16.8
Cotton, small wares	33.0	- 0.8	-16.5	48.5	- 2.5	+ 6.1	15.95	- 2.4	-11.9
Dyeing and finishing	34.0	+ 0.4	-16.0	57.0	- 1.9	+ 5.5	19.60	- 1.4	-11.8
Hats, fur-felt	31.0	+ 1.1	-18.9	72.0	+ 2.1	+ 2.6	21.40	+ 1.4	-19.3
Knit goods	31.0	- 2.3	-16.4	52.0	+ 1.2	+ 9.0	15.65	- 1.4	- 9.1
Silk and rayon goods	29.5	- 7.5	-21.8	45.5	- 1.2	+ 8.2	13.55	- 8.1	-15.5
Woolen and worsted goods	32.0	+ 1.0	-17.4	59.5	+ 0.4	+11.0	18.95	+ 1.7	- 8.1

In the five selected durable-goods industries the average weekly hours of work and average hourly and weekly earnings in January 1938 were--

Weekly hours:
- 36.5 in sawmills
- 34.0 in foundries and machine shops
- 31.0 in brick manufacturing
- 27.5 in automobiles
- 25.0 in blast furnaces and rolling mills

Hourly earnings (in cents):
- 92.0 in automobiles
- 82.0 in blast furnaces and rolling mills
- 71.5 in foundries and machine shops
- 54.0 in brick manufacturing
- 43.5 in sawmills

Weekly hours:
- 42.5 in slaughtering and meat packing
- 36.0 in paper and pulp
- 35.9 in petroleum refining
- 30.0 in cotton-goods manufacturing
- 26.0 in tires and inner tubes

Hourly earnings (in cents):
- 98.0 in petroleum refining
- 96.5 in tires and inner tubes
- 69.0 in slaughtering and meat packing
- 62.5 in paper and pulp
- 42.0 in cotton-goods manufacturing

Weekly earnings:
- $34.30 in petroleum refining
- 29.30 in slaughtering and meat packing
- 25.10 in tires and inner tubes
- 22.40 in paper and pulp
- 12.75 in cotton-goods manufacturing

Six of the 10 selected durable- and nondurable-goods industries reported an average workweek in January at least 20 percent shorter than in January 1937 and three other industries reported smaller reductions in average weekly hours of work. Slaughtering and meat-packing plants averaged a slightly longer workweek this January compared with the same month a year ago.

All 10 selected industries averaged higher hourly earnings this January than in January of last year. The largest gains were 17 percent in automobiles, 16 percent in slaughtering and meat packing, 14 percent in brick manufacturing and foundries and machine shops, and about 13 percent in blast furnaces and rolling mills and petroleum refining.

EMPLOYMENT, PAY ROLLS, WAGES, AND HOURS IN SELECTED NONMANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

	JANUARY 1938*	INCREASE OR DECREASE: DECEMBER 1937 TO JANUARY 1938	INCREASE OR DECREASE: JANUARY 1937 TO JANUARY 1938
RETAIL TRADE		*Percent*	*Percent*
Employment.....	3,320,700	-15.6	- 0.8
Weekly pay roll..	$64,459,000	-12.9	+ 3.2
Weekly hours.....	43.0	- 0.2	- 1.5
Hourly earnings..	$0.55	+ 3.8	+ 7.3
Weekly earnings..	$21.90	+ 3.2	+ 4.1
WHOLESALE TRADE			
Employment.....	1,458,900	- 2.5	+ 0.2
Weekly pay roll..	$43,589,000	- 3.1	+ 3.8
Weekly hours.....	42.0	- 1.3	- 1.1
Hourly earnings..	$0.68	+ 0.3	+ 4.6
Weekly earnings..	$28.95	- 0.6	+ 3.6
METAL MINING			
Employment.....	74,000	- 4.4	+ 0.8
Weekly pay roll..	$1,935,000	- 9.5	+ 1.0
Weekly hours.....	41.5	- 4.0	- 3.9
Hourly earnings..	$0.68	- 1.5	+ 4.4
Weekly earnings..	$27.80	- 5.3	+ 0.2
BITUMINOUS COAL			
Employment.....	444,000	- 2.6	- 7.3
Weekly pay roll..	$7,760,000	-26.1	-24.9
Weekly hours.....	21.5	-25.5	-30.5
Hourly earnings..	$0.87	+ 0.6	+10.9
Weekly earnings..	$19.25	-24.1	-19.0
TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH			
Employment.....	417,000	- 0.3	+ 4.5
Weekly pay roll..	$13,563,000	- 0.9	+12.2
Weekly hours.....	40.0	+ 1.1	+ 0.3
Hourly earnings..	$0.82	- 1.5	+ 7.3
Weekly earnings..	$31.00	- 0.6	+ 7.4

	JANUARY 1938*	INCREASE OR DECREASE: DECEMBER 1937 TO JANUARY 1938	INCREASE OR DECREASE: JANUARY 1937 TO JANUARY 1938
HOTELS		*Percent*	*Percent*
Employment.....	275,200	- 0.6	+ 1.5
Weekly pay roll..	$4,042,000	- 1.3	+ 7.0
Weekly hours.....	46.5	+ 0.2	- 2.8
Hourly earnings..	$0.31	- 0.8	+ 6.8
Weekly earnings..	$14.90	- 0.7	+ 5.4
POWER and LIGHT			
Employment.....	300,800	- 2.2	+ 2.0
Weekly pay roll..	$9,401,000	- 3.4	+ 1.1
Weekly hours.....	39.5	- 2.9	- 2.0
Hourly earnings..	$0.86	+ 1.6	+ 7.7
Weekly earnings..	$33.45	- 1.3	+ 5.0
ELECTRIC RAILROADS			
Employment.....	192,800	- 0.8	- 0.3
Weekly pay roll..	$6,063,000	- 1.3	+ 4.3
Weekly hours.....	45.0	- 1.8	- 2.3
Hourly earnings..	$0.70	+ 0.8	+ 7.1
Weekly earnings..	$32.10	- 0.6	+ 4.7
LAUNDRIES			
Employment.....	223,500	- 0.3	- 1.6
Weekly pay roll..	$3,487,000	- 1.2	+ 2.4
Weekly hours.....	42.0	- 0.7	- 2.7
Hourly earnings..	$0.41	*No change*	+ 7.1
Weekly earnings..	$17.05	- 0.9	+ 4.1
DYEING & CLEANING			
Employment.....	56,700	- 2.5	- 2.1
Weekly pay roll..	$943,000	- 4.8	+ 0.9
Weekly hours.....	39:0	- 3.7	- 4.3
Hourly earnings..	$0.49	+ 1.0	+ 8.3
Weekly earnings..	$18.65	- 2.4	+ 3.0

* *Preliminary*

Business and Economic Conditions in January 1938

AGRICULTURE

Farm Income. The January cash income of farmers from the sale of farm products was estimated by the Department of Agriculture at $603,000,000. This was $72,000,000 smaller than in December and $35,000,000 smaller than in January 1937. Government payments under the agricultural conservation program accounted for an additional $17,000,000 income to farmers in January. They aggregated $8,000,000 in December and $43,000,000 in January a year ago.

California led all other States in the amount of cash income realized from sales of farm products in 1937. It was estimated at nearly $590,000,000. Texas followed with a farm income of approximately $500,000,000, Iowa $490,000,000, and Illinois $460,000,000. Seven States—Ohio, Minnesota, Kansas, Wisconsin, New York, Pennsylvania, and Indiana—each reported cash income from farm marketings of more than $250,000,000 in 1937.

INDUSTRY AND TRADE

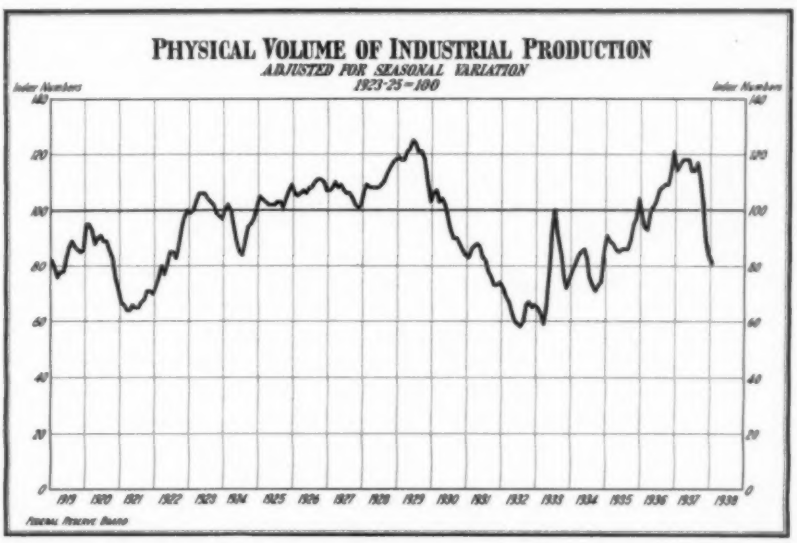
Production of steel ingots increased slightly in January. In other important durable-goods industries, such as automobiles, plate glass, and lumber, output was smaller. Among nondurable-goods industries, gains in production were reported by silk and rayon mills, shoe factories, and meat-packing establishments. Department store sales declined seasonally and sales by variety stores and mail-order houses were considerably below January expectations.

Total output of factories and mines in January was 3 percent lower than in the preceding month. It was about 29 percent below January a year ago.

FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD
Industrial Production

ADJUSTED INDEX 1923-25 = 100	
1938	
January....	81*
1937	
December...	84
November...	89
October....	103
September..	111
August.....	117
July.......	114
June.......	114
May........	118
April......	118
March......	118
February...	116
January....	114

* Preliminary



BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL BAROMETERS

Automobiles. Nearly 210,500 passenger cars and trucks were assembled in January. This compares with 326,000 units in December 1937 and nearly 380,000 units in January 1937.

Bituminous Coal. Output of bituminous coal in January was estimated at approximately 30,200,000 tons—6,050,000 tons less than in the preceding month and 10,800,000 tons less than in January of last year.

Building Construction. The value of buildings for which permits were issued in 1,603 cities in January totaled $174,900,000. Due largely to an increase in permits issued in New York City, the total value of permits issued was 15 percent higher than in December.

Electric Power. Output of electric power totaled 9,335 million kilowatt hours in January. In the preceding month 9,742 million kilowatt hours were produced, and in January 1937 production totaled 9,850 million kilowatt hours.

Railroad Freight Car Loadings. Class I railroads loaded on the average 564,100 cars of freight per week in January. This was 13,200 fewer cars per week than in December and 114,500 fewer cars per week than in January a year ago.

Steel. Slightly more than 1,730,000 tons of steel ingots were produced in January, compared with 1,470,000 tons in the preceding month and 4,720,000 tons in January 1937.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT AND RELIEF IN JANUARY 1938

Employment in the Federal Service. About 1,150,000 persons were employed in the Federal Government Service in January. Slightly more than 700,000 persons (exclusive of force-account, supervisory and technical employees) had jobs in the executive branch of the Government, 328,600 in the military, 5,200 in the legislative, and 2,000 in the judicial service.

P.W.A. Construction Projects. Employment at the site of construction on projects directed by the Public Works Administration declined from 104,700 in December to 96,700 in January. The total wage income of the workers employed declined from about $9,000,000 in December to $7,840,000 in January.

Other Federal Government Construction Projects. About 157,600 workers had jobs on projects financed by regular appropriations and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in January. Their pay roll for the month was $16,250,000.

The Works Program. Projects financed by the Works Progress Administration other than emergency conservation work and that part of P.W.A. work financed by The Works Program provided jobs to 2,500,000 workers in January at wages aggregating nearly $105,500,000.

Emergency Conservation Corps. The number of enrolled workers, camp supervisors, and instructors in the Civilian Conservation Corps declined from 338,200 in December to 335,200 in January. Total wage payments in January amounted to $15,440,000 and were approximately $380,000 less than in the preceding month.

General Relief. Preliminary reports to the Social Security Board from 90 urban areas show that approximately 841,500 families and single persons received $25,650,000 in general relief in January. This was an increase of about 13 percent in the number of cases handled and an increase of 9 percent in the amount of funds expended compared with December 1937.

What Happened to Prices in January 1938

Wholesale Prices. The general level of wholesale commodity prices declined slightly in January and was nearly 6 percent lower than in January 1937. The same commodities which could be bought at wholesale for $100 in 1926 cost $80.90 in January, $81.70 in December, and $85.90 in January a year ago. This is the meaning of the Bureau of Labor Statistics index of wholesale commodity prices, which was 80.9 in January 1938, 81.7 in the preceding month, 85.9 in January of last year, and 100 as the average for 1926.

INDEX OF WHOLESALE PRICES

ITEM	1926	JANUARY 1938	JANUARY 1937	INCREASE (+) OR DECREASE (-) JANUARY 1937 TO JANUARY 1938
	Index	*Index*	*Index*	*Percent*
All commodities	100	80.9	85.9	- 5.8
Farm products	100	71.6	91.3	-21.6
Raw materials	100	74.9	88.1	-15.0
Semimanufactured articles .	100	76.9	85.4	-10.0
Finished products	100	84.3	84.9	- 0.7

Retail Food Prices. Average retail food prices for the country as a whole were nearly 3 percent lower in January. They were 5 percent lower than in January of last year. The Bureau of Labor Statistics index of retail food prices averaged 74 in January, as against 76.1 in December, 77.9 in January 1937, and 100 in 1926. In other words, for every dollar's worth of foodstuffs purchased at retail in 1926, consumers paid on the average 74 cents in January, 76.1 cents in the preceding month, and 77.9 in January of last year.

AVERAGE RETAIL FOOD PRICES FOR THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE

ITEM	RETAIL PRICE		INCREASE (+) OR DECREASE (-) JANUARY 1937 TO JANUARY 1938	
	JANUARY 1938	JANUARY 1937		
	Cents	*Cents*	*Cents*	*Percent*
Bread, pound	8.9	8.4	+ 0.5	+ 5.6
Butter, pound . . .	40.4	41.1	- 0.7	- 0.9
Milk, quart	12.7	12.5	+ 0.2	+ 1.9
Eggs, dozen	35.8	39.7	- 3.9	- 9.1
Potatoes, pound . .	2.0	3.7	- 1.7	-44.1
Lard, pound	13.8	17.7	- 3.9	-21.5
Pork chops, pound .	29.3	33.6	- 4.3	-13.3
Round steak, pound .	32.8	36.0	- 3.2	- 9.5
Sugar, pound	5.5	5.6	- 0.1	- 0.6
Coffee, pound . . .	24.2	24.9	- 0.7	- 3.5

Published under authority of Public Resolution No. 57, approved May 11, 1922 (42 Stat. 541), as amended by section 307 Public Act 212, approved June 30, 1932 (47 Stat. 409). This publication approved by the Director, Bureau of the Budget, September 18, 1934, as amended February 18, 1935.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1938